lines, using state-specific price indices and inter-state price differentials. The national poverty line at 1999-2000 prices is Rs. 327.56 per month in rural areas and Rs. 454.11 per capita per month in urban areas.

(c) The Government has adopted a three pronged strategy for reducing poverty (i) acceleration of economic growth with a focus on sectors which are employment intensive; (ii) human and social development through provision of basic minimum services; and (iii) targeted anti poverty programmes.

In order to take care of basic needs of India's poor at the village level, an initiative in the form of Prime Minister's Gramodaya Yojana (PMGY) was launched. The PMGY envisages Additional Central Assistance for selected basic minimum services in order to focus on certain priority areas of the Government. These include primary health, primay education, rural, shelter, drinking water, rural electrification and nutrition.

In addition, with efffect from June, 1997 the Public Distribution system in India was streamlined by issuing special cards to families Below Poverty Line (BPL) and selling food grains under PDS to them at specially subsidised prices which was about 50% of the economic Costs. Under the new scheme, *viz.,* the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) each poor family is entitled to 35 kgs of foodgrains.

In order to make the TPDS more focused and targeted towards the very poor category, the "Antyodaya Anna Yojana" provides 35 kgs. of foodgrains to the poorest of the poor families at a highly subsidized rate of Rs. 2 per kg., for wheat and Rs. 3 per kg., for rice. In the budget for 2004-05 presented on 8.7.04 it was announced that the coverage of Antyodaya Anna Yojana will be increased from 1.5 crore families to 2.0 crore families.

Modernisation of Leather Industry

154. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) Whether the State Government of West Bengal has requested for release of Rs. 400 crore fund for modernisation of leather industry; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

The Principal Secretary, Commerce and Industries Department, Government of West Bengal in his letter dated 15.4.2004 addressed to the Secretary, Planning Commission (copy endorsed to Joint Secretary, Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India) requested for allocation of fund for projects in West Bengal under two schemes of Leather Sector *viz.* Scheme for Integrated Development of Leather Sector and Scheme for Infrastructure Strengthening of Leather Sector having 10th Plan outlays of Rs. 290 crore and Rs. 110 crore respectively.

(b) Out of outlay of Rs. 110 crore in the Scheme for Infrastructure Strengthening of Leather Sector, an amount of Rs. 5 crore has already been earmarked for West Bengal for setting up of a Leather Goods Park.

The other scheme *i.e.* Scheme for Integrated Development of Leather Sector is yet to be approved by the Government. Allocation of fund under the said scheme would be decided by the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion once the scheme is approved.

Population under BPL.

155. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that around 26 percent of our population still live below the poverty line; and

(b) what is our specific action plan for reducing poverty during the Tenth Plan period and how far we have succeeded in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) Yes Sir, the poverty ratio estimated from the